

OCHE COMMUNICATIONS POSITION DESCRIPTION-DRAFT

Title Options:

Director of ...	Marketing and Communications Communications
Assistant Commissioner for...	Special Projects External Affairs or External Relations
Associate Commissioner for...	Community and Economic Development Public Relations
Chief.....Officer	Constituent Relations Information
Public Information Officer	Outreach

General Areas of Responsibility:

This position reports directly to the Commissioner of Higher Education and is responsible for the development, execution and management of communications, marketing, and community relations for the Montana University System (MUS). The director will implement the MUS communications plan, which includes strategies to increase public awareness and involvement of all stakeholders in the values and direction of the Montana Board of Regents, and promote a sense of shared ownership and pride in the Montana University System.

The incumbent will serve as the primary contact with representatives of the media on university system issues and will ensure that accurate and timely information regarding the university system is readily available to the public. The incumbent will advise and assist the Commissioner and Regents with their preparations for public appearances, and will assist in a variety of special projects including those relating to community outreach and economic development.

Specific Duties:

1. Develop, execute and manage the communications plan for the Montana University System.
 - a. Establish goals and objectives of the MUS communication plan, under the direction of the Commissioner and according to the strategic objectives of the Board of Regents;
 - b. Oversee the development of messages and themes for the communications plan;
 - c. Proactively market and promote the message, image, and accomplishments of the MUS to external audiences;
 - d. Assure delivery of messages, themes, and images are consistent with the communications plan;
 - e. Provide leadership to the university relations council of the MUS and serve as liaison between the council and the Commissioner; and
 - f. Oversee the development and maintenance of a high-quality, accurate and user-friendly presence of the MUS on the web.
 - g. Ensure that state elected officials and candidates are systematically contacted by Regents, OCHE, or MUS staff members, and provided realistic opportunities for advice and counsel in regard to issues facing the Montana University System.

2. Provide public information and outreach by working effectively with the media and managing all public relations.

- a. Manage internal and external communications for the MUS to disseminate information to targeted external audiences;
- b. Plan, design, and execute media outreach of the activities and accomplishments of the Board of Regents and the university system;
- c. Gather, write, and disseminate news materials designed to communicate the nature, goals, performance, and key messages of the MUS and the Board of Regents;
- d. Plan, execute, and evaluate special events to publicize and promote public higher education in Montana;
- e. Respond to information requests from the public, representatives of the media, legislative, executive branch and others; and
- f. Maintain regular contact with individuals in similar positions in other state agencies and other related organizations.

3. Assist and represent the Commissioner of Higher Education in contacts, meetings, and communications with external constituents.

- a. Develop and manage the database of contacts between members of the executive and legislative branches of the Regents, the Office of the Commissioner, and other representatives of the MUS;
- b. Assist with preparation for public appearances;
- c. Write or edit issue papers, letters, and responses to information requests;
- d. May prepare or present testimony before legislative committees and other public bodies; and
- e. Assist the Commissioner with special projects such as those relating to community outreach and economic development.

Qualifications:

A minimum of bachelor's degree in communications or related area is required and a master's degree is preferred.

A minimum of five years of experience or background in journalism, communications, education, English, marketing or media relations is required. Specific experience with higher education issues is desirable. Additional qualifications include: Proven experience in media relations; familiarity with graphic design principles; superior interpersonal, written and oral communications and organization skills; understanding and experience with web-based and electronic communications within the context of communications strategy; ability to work under pressure, lead in a collaborative manner, and have a demonstrated track record as a team player; ability to research, listen, and synthesize the goals and accomplishments of the university system into coherent, factual and error-free communications; and understanding of strategic communications practices and processes.

This position is a key advisory to the Commissioner of Higher Education and to members of the Board of Regents on the wide array of issues under their purview. Excellent judgment and comprehensive relevant work experience are needed in determining and measuring how and when to initiate information or respond to information and how those responses will be received by the public and media. Superb interpersonal communication skills are absolutely essential.

Knowledge of university system priorities and the interconnection of programs within the university system and between the university system and other public and private organizations are preferred.